

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

CHAPTER III. MARIAN.

THE little child who was so long prayed for, and who came at last in answer to James Ashurst's fervent prayers, had nothing during her childhood to distinguish her from ordinary children. It is scarcely worthy of record that her mother had a hundred anecdotes illustrative of her precocity, of her difference from other infants, of certain peculiarities never before noticed in a child of tender years. All mothers say these things, whether they believe them or not, and Mrs. Ashurst, stretched on her sick couch, did believe them, and found in watching what she believed to be the abnormal gambols of her child, a certain relief from the constant dreary wearing pain which sapped her strength, and rendered her life void, and colourless, and unsatisfactory. James Ashurst believed them fervently; even if they had required a greater amount of credulity than that which he was blessed with, he, knowing it gave the greatest pleasure to his wife, would have stuck to the text that Marian was a wonderful, "really, he might say, a very wonderful, child." But he had never seen anything of childhood since his own, which he had forgotten, and the awakening of the commonest faculties in his daughter came upon him as extraordinary revelations of subtle character, which, when their possessor had arrived at years of maturity, would astonish the world. The Helmingham people did not subscribe to these opinions. Most of them had children of their own, who, they considered, were quite as eccentric, and odd, and peculiar as Marian Ashurst. "Not that I'm for 'lowin' that to be pert and

sassy one minute, and sittin' mumchance wi'out sa much as a word to throw at a dog the next, is quite manners," they would say among themselves, "but what's ye to expect? Poor Mrs. Ashurst layin' on the brode of her back, and little enough of that, poor thing, and that poor feckless creature, the schoolmaster, buzzed i' his 'ed wi' book larnin' and that! A pretty pair to bring up such a tyke as Miss Madge!"

That was in the very early days of her life. As the "tyke" grew up she dropped all outward signs of tykeishness, and seemed to be endeavouring to prove that eccentricity was the very last thing to be ascribed to her. The Misses Lewin, whose finishing school was renowned throughout the county, declared they had never had so quick or so hard-working a pupil as Miss Ashurst, or one who had done them so much credit in so short a time. The new rector of Helmingham declared that he should not have known how to get through his class and parish work, had it not been for the assistance which he had received from Miss Ashurst, at times when—when really—well, other young ladies would, without the slightest harm to themselves, be it said, have been enjoying themselves in the croquet-ground. When the wardrobe woman retired from the school to enter into the bonds of wedlock with the drill-sergeant (whose expansive chest and manly figure when going through the "exercise without clubs," might have softened Medusa herself), Marian Ashurst at once took upon herself the vacant situation, and resolutely refused to allow any one else to fill it. These may have been put down as eccentricities; they were evidences of odd character certainly not usually found in girls of Marian's age, but they were proofs of a spirit far above tykeishness. All her best

friends, except of course the members of her family, whose views regarding her were naturally extremely circumscribed, noticed in the girl an exceedingly great desire for the acquisition of knowledge, a power of industry and application quite unusual, an extraordinary devotion to anything she undertook, which suffered itself to be turned away by no temptation, to be wearied by no fatigue. Always eager to help in any scheme, always bright-eyed and clear-headed and keen-witted, never unduly asserting herself, but always having her own way while persuading her interlocutors that she was following their dictates, the odd shy child grew up into a girl less shy indeed, but scarcely less odd. And certainly not loveable; those who fought her battles most strongly—and even in that secluded village there were social and domestic battles, strong internecine warfare, carried on with as much rancour as in the great city itself—were compelled to admit there was “a something” in her which they disliked, and which occasionally was eminently repulsive.

This something had developed itself strongly in the character of the child, before she emerged into girlhood, and though it remained vague as to definition, while distinct as to impression in the minds of others, Marian herself understood it perfectly, and could have told any one, had she chosen, what it was that made her unlike the other children, apart from her being brighter and smarter than they, a difference which she also perfectly understood. She would have said, “I am very fond of money, and the others are not; they are content to have food and clothes, but I like to see the money that is paid for them, and to have some of it, all for myself, and to heap it up and look at it, and I am not satisfied as they are, when they have what they want—I want better things, nicer food, and smarter clothes, and more than them, the money. I don’t say so, because I know papa hasn’t got it, and so he cannot give it to me, but I wish he could. There is no use talking and grumbling about things we cannot have; people laugh at you, and are glad you are so foolish when you do that, so I say nothing about it, but I wish I was rich.”

Marian would have made some such answer to any one who should have endeavoured to get at her mind to find out what that was lurking there, never clearly seen, but always plainly felt, which made her “old fashioned,” in other than the pathetic

and interesting sense in which that expression has come to be used with reference to children, before she had entered upon her teens.

A clever mother would have found out this grave and ominous component of the child’s character—would have interpreted the absence of the thoughtless extravagance, so charming, if sometimes so trying, of childhood—would have been quick to have noticed that Marian asked, “What will it cost?” and gravely entered into mental calculation on occasions when other children would have demanded the purchase of a coveted article clamorously, and shrieked if it were refused. But Mrs. Ashurst was not a clever mother, she was only a loving, indulgent, rather helpless one, and the little Marian’s careful ways were such a practical comfort to her, while the child was young, that it never occurred to her to investigate their origin, to ask whether such a very desirable and fortunate effect could by possibility have a reprehensible, dangerous, insidious cause. Marian never wasted her pennies, Marian never spoiled her frocks, Marian never lost or broke anything; all these exceptional virtues Mrs. Ashurst carefully noted and treasured in the storehouse of her memory. What she did not notice was, that Marian never gave anything away, never voluntarily shared any of her little possessions with her playfellows, and, when directed to do so, complied with a reluctance which all her pride, all her brave dread of the appearance of being coerced, hardly enabled her to subdue, and suffered afterwards in an unchildlike way. What she did not observe was, that Marian was not to be taken in by glitter and show; that she preferred, from the early days in which her power of exhibiting her preference was limited by the extent of the choice which the toy-merchant—who combined hardbake and hairdressing with ministering to the pleasures of infancy—afforded within the sum of sixpence. If Marian took any one into her confidence, or asked advice on such solemn occasions—generally ensuing on a protracted hoarding of the coin in question—it would not be by the questions, “Is it the prettiest?” “Is it the nicest?” but, “Do you think it is worth sixpence?” and the child would look from the toy to the money, held closely in the shut palm of her chubby hand, with a perturbed countenance, in which the pleasure of the acquisition was almost neutralised by the pain of the payment—a countenance

in which the spirit of barter was to be discerned by knowing eyes. But none such took note of Marian's childhood. The illumination of love is rather dazzling than searching in the case of mothers of Mrs. Ashurst's class, and she was dazzled. Marian was perfection in her eyes, and at an age at which the inversion of the relations between mother and daughter, common enough in later life, would have appeared to others unreasonable, preposterous, Mrs. Ashurst surrendered herself wholly, happily, to the guidance and the care of her daughter. The inevitable self-assertion of the stronger mind took place, the inevitable submission of the weaker. In this instance, a gentle, persuasive, unconscious self-assertion, a joyful yielding, without one traversing thought of humiliation or deposition.

Her daughter was so clever, so helpful, so grave, so good, her economy and management—surely they were wonderful in so young a girl, and must have come to her by instinct?—rendered life such a different, so much easier a thing, delicate as she was, and requiring so disproportionate a share of their small means to be expended on her, that it was not surprising Mrs. Ashurst should see no possibility of evil in the origin of such qualities.

As for Marian's father, he was about as likely to discover a comet or a continent as to discern a flaw in his daughter's moral nature. The child, so longed for, so fervently implored, remained always, in her father's sight, Heaven's best gift to him; and he rejoiced exceedingly, and wondered not a little, as she developed into the girl whom we have seen beside his death-bed. He rejoiced because she was so clever, so quick, so ready, had such a masterly mind and happy faculty of acquiring knowledge; knowledge of the kind he prized and revered; of the kind which he felt would remain to her, an inheritance for her life. He wondered why she was so strong, for he knew she did not take the peculiar kind of strength of character from him or from her mother.

It was not to be wondered at that these peculiarities of Marian Ashurst were noticed by the inhabitants of the village where she was born, and where her childish days had been passed; but it was remarkable that they were regarded with anything but admiration. For a keen appreciation of money, and an unfailing determination to obtain their money's worth, had long been held to be eminently charac-

teristic of the denizens of Helmingham. The cheese-factor used to declare that the hardest bargains throughout his county connexion were those which Mrs. Croke, and Mrs. Whicher, and, worst of all, old Mrs. M'Shaw (who, though Helmingham born and bred, had married Sandy M'Shaw, a Scotch gardener, imported by old Squire Creswell) drove with him. Not the very best ale to be found in the cellars of the Lion at Brocksopp (and they could give you a good glass of ale, bright, beaming, and mellow, at the Lion, when they chose), not the strongest mahogany-coloured brandy-and-water, mixed in the bar by the fair hands of Miss Parkhurst herself, not even the celebrated rum-punch, the recipe of which, like the songs of the Scandinavian scalds, had never been written out, but had descended orally to old Tilley, the short, stout, rubicund landlord—had ever softened the heart of a Helmingham farmer in the matter of business, or induced him to take a shilling less for a quarter of wheat, or a truss of straw, than he had originally made up his mind to sell it at.

"Canny Helmingham," was its name throughout the county, and its people were proud of it. Mr. Frampton, an earnest clergyman who had succeeded the old rector, had been forewarned of the popular prejudice, and on the second Sunday of his ministry addressed his parishioners in a very powerful and eloquent discourse upon the wickedness of avarice and the folly of heaping up worldly riches; after which, seeing that the only effect his sermon had was to lay him open to palpable rudeness, he wisely concentrated his energies on his translation of Horace's Odes (which has since gained him such great renown, and of which at least forty copies have been sold), and left his parishioners' souls to take care of themselves. But however canny and saving they might be, and however sharply they might battle with the cheese-factor, and look after the dairymaid, as behoved farmers' wives in these awful days of free trade (they had a firm belief in Helmingham that "Cobden," under which generic name they understood it, was a kind of pest, as is the smut in wheat, or the tick in sheep), all the principal dames in the village were greatly shocked at the unnatural love of money which it was impossible to help noticing in Marian Ashurst.

"There was time enow to think o' they things, money and such like fash, when pipples was settled down," as Mrs. Croke said, "but to see children hardenin' their

hearts and scrooin' their pocket-money is unnatural, to say the least of it!" It was unnatural and unpopular in Helmingham. Mrs. Croke put such a screw on the cheese-factor, that in the evening after his dealings with her, that worthy filled the commercial room at the Lion with strange oaths and modern instances of sharp dealing in which Mrs. Croke bore away the palm; but she was highly indignant when Lotty Croke's godmother bought her a savings bank, a grey edifice, with what theatrical people call a practicable chimney down which the intended savings should be deposited. Mrs. Whicher's dairymaid, who, being from Ireland, and a Roman Catholic in faith, was looked upon with suspicion, not to say fear, in the village, and who was regarded by the farmers as in constant, though secret, communication with the Pope of Rome and the Jesuit College generally, declared that her mistress "cathered the life out of her" in the matter of small wages and much work; but Mrs. Whicher's daughter, Emily, had more crimson gowns, and more elegant bonnets, with regular fields of poppies, and perfect harvests of ears of corn growing out of them, than any of her compeers, for which choice articles the heavy bill of Madame Morgan—formerly of Paris, now of Brocksopp—was paid without a murmur. "It's unnatral in a gell like Marian Ashurst to think so much o' money and what it brings," would be a frequent remark at one of those private Helmingham institutions known as "Thick teas." And then Mrs. Croke would say, "And what like will a gell o' that sort look to marry? Why a man maun have poun's and poun's before she'd say, 'yea' and buckle to!"

But that was a matter which Marian had already decided upon.

CHAPTER IV. MARIAN'S CHOICE.

At a time when it seemed as though the unchildlike qualities which had distinguished the child from her playmates and coevals were intensifying and maturing in the girl growing up, then, to all appearance, hard, calculating, and mercenary, Marian Ashurst fell in love, and thenceforward the whole current of her being was diverted into healthier and more natural channels. Fell in love is the right and the only description of the process, so far as Marian was concerned. Of course she had frequently discussed the great question which racks the hearts of boarding school misses, and helps to fill up the

spare time of middle-aged women, with her young companions; had listened with outward calmness and propriety, but with an enormous amount of unshown cynicism, to their simple gushings; and had said sufficient to lead them to believe that she joined in their fervent admiration of and aspiration for young men with black eyes and white hands, straight noses, and curly hair. But all the time Marian was building for herself a castle in the air, the proprietor of which, whose wife she intended to be, was a very different person from the hair-dressers' dummies whose regularity of feature caused the hearts of her companions to palpitate. The personal appearance of her future husband had never given her an instant's care; she had no preference in the colour of his eyes or hair, in his height, style, or even of his age, except she thought she would rather he were old. Being old, he was more likely to be generous, less likely to be selfish, more likely to have amassed riches and to be wealthy. His fortune would be made, not to be made; there would be no struggling, no self-denial, no hope required. Marian's domestic experiences caused her to hate anything in which hope was required; she had been dosed with hope without the smallest improvement, and had lost faith in the treatment. Marriage was the one chance possible for her to carry out the dearest, most deeply implanted, longest cherished aspiration of her heart—the acquisition of money and power. She knew that the possession of the one led to the other, from the time when she had saved her schoolgirl pennies and had noticed the court paid to her by her little friends, to the then moment, when the mere fact of her having a small stock of ready money, even more than her sense and shrewdness, gave her position in that impecunious household, she had recognised the impossibility of achieving even a semblance of happiness in poverty. When she married, it should be for money, and for money alone. In the hard school of life in which she had been trained she had learned that the prize she was aiming at was a great one, and one difficult to be obtained; but that knowledge only made her the more determined in its pursuit. The difficulties around her were immense; in the narrow circle in which she lived she had not any present chances of meeting with any person likely to be able to give her the position which she sought, far less of rendering him subservient to her wishes. But she waited

and hoped; she was waiting and hoping, calmly and quietly fulfilling the ordinary duties of her very ordinary life, but never losing sight of her fixed intent. Then across the path of her life there came a man who seemed to give promise of eventually fulfilling the requirements she had planned out for herself. It was but a promise; there was nothing tangible; but the promise was so good, the girl's heart yearned for an occupant, and, with all its hard teaching and its worldly aspirations, it was but human after all. So her human heart and her worldly wisdom came to a compromise in the matter of her acceptance of a lover, and the result of that compromise was her engagement to Walter Joyce.

When the Helmingham Grammar School was under the misrule of old Dr. Munch, then at its lowest ebb, and nominations to the foundation were to be had for the asking, and, indeed, in many cases were sent a-begging, it occurred to the old head master to offer one of the vacancies to Mr. Joyce, the principal grocer and maltster of the village, whose son was then just of an age to render him accessible to the benefits of the education which Sir Ranulph Clinton had demised to the youth of Helmingham, and which was then being so imperfectly supplied to them under the auspices of Dr. Munch. You must not for an instant imagine that the offer was made by the old Doctor out of pure loving-kindness and magnanimity; he looked at it, as he did at most things, from a purely practical point of view; he owed Joyce, the grocer, so much money, and if Joyce, the grocer, would write him a receipt in full for all his indebtedness in return for a nomination for Joyce junior, at least he, the Doctor, would not have done a bad stroke of business. He would have wiped out an existing score, the value of which proceeding meant, in Dr. Munch's eyes, that he would be enabled at once to commence a fresh one, while the acquisition of young Joyce as a scholar would not cause one atom of difference in the manner in which the school was conducted, or rather left to conduct itself. The offer was worth making, for the debt was heavy, though the Doctor was by no means sure of its being accepted. Andrew Joyce was not Helmingham born; he had come from Spindleton, one of the large inland capitals, and had purchased the business which he owned. He was not popular among the Helmingham folk, who were all strict church people, so far as morning service attending, tithe paying, and parson-respecting were con-

cerned, from the fact that his religious tendencies were suspected to be what the villagers termed "methodic." He had his seat in the village church, it is true, and put in an appearance there on the Sunday morning, but instead of spending the Sabbath evening in the orthodox way—which at Helmingham consisted in sitting in the best parlour, with a very dim light, and enjoying the blessings of sound sleep, while Nelson's *Fasts and Festivals*, or some equally proper work, rested on the sleeper's knee, until it fell off with a crash, and was only recovered to be held upside down until the grateful announcement of the arrival of supper—Mr. Joyce was in the habit of dropping into Salem Chapel, where Mr. Stoker, a shining light from the pottery district, dealt forth the most uncomfortable doctrine in the most forcible manner. The Helmingham people declared, too, that Andrew Joyce was "uncanny" in other ways; he was close-fisted and niggardly, his name was to be found on no subscription list; he was litigious; he declared that Mr. Prickett, the old-fashioned solicitor of the village, was too slow for him, and he put his law matters into the hands of Messrs. Sheen and Nasmyth, attorneys at Brocksopp, who levied a distress before other people had served a writ, and who were considered the sharpest practitioners in the county. Old Dr. Munch had heard of the process of Messrs. Sheen and Nasmyth, and the dread of any of it being exercised on him originally prompted his offer to Andrew Joyce. He knew that he might count on an ally in Andrew Joyce's wife, a superior woman in very delicate health, who had great influence with her husband, and who was devoted to her only son. Mrs. Joyce, when Hester Baines, had been a Bible-class teacher in Spindleton, and had had herself a fair amount of education, would have had more, for she was a very earnest woman in her vocation, ever striving to gain more knowledge herself for the mere purpose of imparting it to others, but from her early youth she had been fighting with a spinal disease, to which she was gradually succumbing, so that although sour granite-faced Andrew Joyce was not the exact help-mate that the girl so full of love and trust would have chosen for herself, when he offered her his hand and his home, she was glad to avail herself of the protection thus afforded, and of the temporary peace which she could thus enjoy, until called, as she thought she should be, very speedily to her eternal rest.

That call did not come nearly as soon as Hester Baines had anticipated; not, indeed, until nearly a score of years after she gave up Bible-teaching, and became Andrew Joyce's wife. In the second year of her marriage a son was born to her, and thenceforward she lived for him, and for him alone. He was a small, delicate, sallow-faced boy, with enormous liquid eyes, and rich red lips, and a long throat, and thin limbs, and long skinny hands. A shy retiring lad, with an invincible dislike to society of any kind, even that of other boys; with a hatred of games, and fun; and an irrepressible tendency to hide away somewhere, anywhere, in an old lumber-room amid the disused trunks and broken clothes-horses, and general lumber, or under the wide-spreading branches of a tree, and then, extended prone on his stomach, to lie, with his head resting on his hands, and a book flat between his face-supporting arms. He got licked before he had been a week at the school, because he openly stated he did not like half-holidays, a doctrine which when first whispered among his schoolfellows was looked upon as incredible, but which, on proof of its promulgation, brought down upon its holder severe punishment. Despite of all Dr. Munch's somnolency and neglect, despite of all his class-fellows' idleness, ridicule, or contumely, young Joyce would learn, would make progress, would acquire accurate information in a very extraordinary way. When Mr. Ashurst assumed the reins of government at Helmingham Grammar School, the proficiency, promise, and industry of Walter Joyce were the only things that gave the new dominie the smallest gleam of interest in his new avocation. With the advent of the new head master Walter Joyce entered upon a new career; for the first time in his life he found some one to appreciate him, some one who could understand his work, praise what he had done, and encourage him to greater efforts. This had hitherto been wanting in the young man's life. His father liked to know that the boy "stuck to his book;" but was at last incapable of understanding what that sticking to the book produced, and his mother, though conscious that her son possessed talent such as she had always coveted for him, had no idea of the real extent of his learning. James Ashurst was the only one in Helmingham who could rate his scholar's gifts at their proper value, and the dominie's kind heart yearned with delight at the prospect of raising such a creditable flower of learning in such un-

promising soil. He praised himself, not merely with the young man's present but with his future. It was his greatest hope that one of the scholarships at his old college should be gained by a pupil from Helmingham, and that that pupil should be Walter Joyce. Mr. Ashurst had been in communication with the college authorities on the subject; he had obtained a very unwilling assent—an assent that would have been a refusal had it not been for Mrs. Joyce's influence—from Walter's father that he would give his son an adequate sum for his maintenance at the University, and he was looking forward to a quick coming time when a scholarship should be vacant, for which he was certain Walter had a most excellent chance, when Mrs. Joyce had a fit and died. From that time forth Andrew Joyce was a changed man. He had loved his wife in his grim, sour, puritanical way, loved her sufficiently to strive against this grimness and puritanism to the extent of his consenting to live for the most part in the ordinary fashion of the world. But when that gentle influence was once removed, when the hard-headed, narrow-minded man had no longer the soft answer to turn away his wrath, the soft face to look appealingly up against his harsh judgment, the quick intellect to combat his one-sided dogmatisms, he fell away at once, and blossomed out as the bitter bigot into which he had gradually but surely been growing. No college education for his son then; no assistance for him from a bloated hierarchy, as he remarked at a public meeting, glancing at Mr. Sefton, the curate, who had eighty pounds a year and four children; no money of his to be spent by his son in a dissolute and debauched career at the university. Mr. Stoker had not been at any university—as, indeed, he had not, having picked up most of his limited education from a travelling tinker, who combined pot-mending and knife-grinding with Bible and tract selling—and where would you meet with a better preacher of the Gospels, a more shining light, or a comelier vessel? Mr. Stoker was all in all to Andrew Joyce then, and when Andrew Joyce died, six months afterwards, it was found that, with the exception of the legacy of a couple of hundred pounds to his son, he had left all his money to Mr. Stoker, and to the chapel and charities represented by that erudite divine.

It was a sad blow to Walter Joyce, and almost as sharp a one to James Ashurst.

The two men—Walter was a man now—grieved together over the overturned hopes and the extinguished ambition. It was impossible for Walter to attempt to go to college just then. There was no scholarship vacant, and if there had been, the amount to be won might probably have been insufficient even for this modest youth. There was no help for it; he must give up the idea. What, then, was he to do? Mr. Ashurst answered that in his usual impulsive way. Walter should become under-master in the school. The number of boys had increased immensely. There was more work than he and Dr. Breitmann could manage; oh yes, he was sure of it, he had thought so a long time, and Walter should become third classical master, with a salary of sixty pounds a year, and board and lodging in Mr. Ashurst's house. It was a rash and wild suggestion, just likely to emanate from such a man as James Ashurst. The number of boys had increased, and Mr. Ashurst's energy had decreased; but there was Dr. Breitmann, a kindly, well-read, well-educated doctor of philosophy, from Leipzig; a fine classical scholar, though he pronounced "amo" as "ahmo," and "Dido" as "Taito;" a gentleman, though his clothes were threadbare, and he only ate meat once a week, and sometimes not then unless he were asked out; and a disciplinarian, though he smoked like a limekiln; a habit which in the Helmingham school-boys' eyes proclaimed the confirmed debauchee of the Giovanni or man-about-town type. Walter Joyce had been a favourite pupil of the doctor's, and was welcomed as a colleague by his old tutor with the utmost warmth. It was understood that his engagement was only temporary; he would soon have enough money to enable him, with a scholarship, to astonish the university, and then—! Meanwhile Mr. Ashurst and all around repeated that his talents were marvellous, and his future success indisputable.

That was the reason why Marian Ashurst fell in love with him. As has before been said, she thought nothing of outward appearance, although Walter Joyce had grown into a sufficiently comely man, small indeed, but with fine eyes and an eloquent mouth, and a neatly turned figure; nor, though a refined and educated girl, did she estimate his talents save for what they would bring. He was to make a success in his future life! that was what she thought of—her father said so, and so far

in matters of cleverness and book learning, and so on, her father's opinion was worth something. Walter Joyce was to make money and position, the two things of which she thought, and dreamed, and hoped for, night and day. There was no one else among her acquaintance with his power. No farmer within the memory of living generations had done more than to keep up the homestead bequeathed to him whilst attempting to increase the number or the value of his fields; and even the gratification of her love of money would have been but a poor compensation to a girl of Marian's innate good breeding and refinement for being compelled to pass her life in the society of a boor or a churl. No! Walter Joyce combined the advantage of education and good looks, with the prospect of attaining wealth and distinction; he was her father's favourite, and was well thought of by everybody, and—and she loved him very much, and was delighted to comfort herself with the thought that in doing so she had not sacrificed any of what she was pleased to consider the guiding principles of her life.

And he, Walter Joyce, did he reciprocate, was he in love with Marian? Has it ever been your lot to see an ugly or, better still, what is called an ordinary man—for ugliness has become fashionable both in fiction and in society—to see an ordinary looking man hitherto politely ignored, if not snubbed, suddenly taken special notice of by a handsome woman, a recognised leader of her set, who, for some special purpose of her own, suddenly discovering that he has brains, or conversational power, or some peculiar fascination, singles him out from the surrounding ruck, steeps him in the sunlight of her eyes, and intoxicates him with the subtle wiles of her address? It does one good, it acts as a moral shower-bath, to see such a man under such circumstances. Your fine fellow simpers and purrs for a moment, and takes it all as real legitimate homage to his beauty; but the ordinary man cannot, so soon as he has got over his surprise at the sensation, cannot be too grateful, cannot find ways and means—cumbersome frequently and ungraceful, but eminently sincere—of showing his appreciation of the woman. Thus it was with Walter Joyce. The knowledge that he was a grocer's son had added immensely to the original shyness and sensitiveness of his disposition, and the free manner in which his frank and delicate personal appearance had been made the butt of out-

spoken "chaff" of the school-boys had made him singularly misogynistic. Since the early days of his youth, when he had been compelled to give a very unwilling attendance twice a week at the dancing academy of Mr. Hardy, where the boys of the Helmingham Grammar School had their manners softened, nor were suffered to become brutal, by the study of the terpsichorean art, in the company of the young ladies from the Misses Lewins' establishment, Walter Joyce had resolutely eschewed any and every charge of mixing in female society. He knew nothing of it, and pretended to despise it; it is needless to say, therefore, that so soon as he was brought into daily communication with a girl like Marian Ashurst, possessed both of beauty and refinement, he fell hopelessly in love with her, and gave up every thought, idea, and hope, save that in which she bore a part. She was his goddess, and he would worship her humbly and at a distance. It would be sufficient for him to touch the hem of her robe, to hear the sound of her voice, to gaze at her with big dilated eyes, which—not that he knew it—were eloquent with love, and tenderness, and worship.

Their love was known to each other, and to but very few else. Mr. Ashurst, looking up from his newspaper in the blessed interval between the departure of the boys to bed, and the modest little supper, the only meal which the family—in which Joyce was included—had in private, may have noticed the figures of his daughter and his usher, erst his favourite pupil, lingering in the deepening twilight round the lawn, or seen "their plighted shadows blended into one" in the soft rays of the moonlight. But, if he thought anything about it, he never made any remark. Life was very hard and very earnest with James Ashurst, and he may have found something softening and pleasing in this little bit of romance, something which he may have wished to leave undisturbed by worldly suggestions or practical hints. Or, he may have had no idea of what was actually going on. A man with an incipient disease beginning to tell upon him, with a sickly wife, and a perpetual striving not merely to make both ends meet, but to prevent them bursting so wide asunder as to leave a gap through which he must inevitably fall into ruin between them, has but little time, or opportunity, or inclination, for observing narrowly the conduct even of those near and dear to him. Mrs.

Ashurst, in her invalid state, was only too glad to think that the few hours which Marian took in respite from attendance on her mother were pleasantly employed, to inquire where or in whose society they were passed. Neither Marian's family nor Joyce kept any company by whom their absence would be noticed; and as for the villagers, they had fully made up their minds on the one side that Marian was determined to make a splendid match; on the other, that the mere fact of Walter Joyce's scholarship was so great as to incapacitate him from the pursuit of ordinary human frailties: so that not the ghost of a speculation as to the relative position of the couple had arisen amongst them. And the two young people loved, and hoped, and erected their little castles in the air, which were palatial indeed as hope-depicted by Marian, though less ambitious as limned by Walter Joyce, when Mr. Ashurst's death came upon them like a thunderbolt, and blew their unsubstantial edifices into the air.

See them here on this calm summer evening, pacing round and round the lawn, as they used to do, in the old days already ages ago as it seems, when James Ashurst, newspaper in hand, would throw occasional glances at them from the study window. Marian, instead of letting her fingers lightly touch her companion's wrist, as is her wont, has passed her arm through his, and her fingers are clasped together round it, and she looks up in his face, as they come to a standstill beneath the big outspread branches of the old oak, with an earnest tearful gaze such as she has seldom, if ever, worn before. There must be matter of moment between these two just now, for Joyce's face looks wan and worn; there are deep hollows beneath his large eyes, and he strives ineffectually to conceal, with an occasional movement of his hand, the rapid anxious play of the muscles round his mouth. Marian is the first to speak.

"And so you take Mr. Benthall's decision as final, Walter, and are determined to go to London?"

"Darling, what else can I do? Here is Mr. Benthall's letter, in which he tells me that, without the least wish to disturb me—a mere polite phrase that—he shall bring his own assistant master to Helmingham. He writes, and means kindly, I've no doubt—but here's the fact!"

"Oh, yes, I'm sure he's a gentleman, Walter; his letter to mamma proves that,

offering to defer his arrival at the school-house until our own time. Of course that is impossible, and we go into Mr. Swainson's lodgings at once."

"My dearest Marian, my own pet, I hate to think of you in lodgings; I cannot bear to picture you so!"

"You must make haste and get your position, and take me to share it, then, Walter!" said the girl, with a half melancholy smile; "you must do great things, Walter. Dear papa always said you would, and you must prove how right he was!"

"Dearest, your poor father calculated on my success at college for the furtherance of my fortune, and now all that chance is over! Whatever I do now must be——"

"By the aid of your own talent and industry, exactly the same appliances which you had to rely on if you had gone to the university, Walter. You don't fear the result? you're not alarmed and desponding at the turn which affairs have taken? It's impossible you can fail to attain distinction, and—and money and—and position, Walter—you must,—don't you feel it?—you must!"

"Yes, dear, I feel it; I hope—I think! perhaps not so strongly, so enthusiastically as you do. You see,—don't be downcast, Marian, but it's best to look these things in the face, darling!—all I can try to get is a tutor's, or an usher's, or a secretary's place, and in any of these the want of the university stamp is heavily against me. There's no disguising that, Marian!"

"Oh, indeed; is that so?"

"Yes, child, undoubtedly. The university degree is like the hall mark in silver, and I'm afraid I shall find very few persons willing to accept me as the genuine article without it."

"And all this risk might have been avoided if your father had only——"

"Well, yes; but then, Marian darling, if my father had left me money to go to college immediately on his death I should never have known you—known you, I mean, as you are, the dearest and sweetest of women."

He drew her to him as he spoke and pressed his lips on her forehead. She received the kiss without any undue emotion, and said:

"Perhaps that had been for the best, Walter."

"Marian, that's rank blasphemy. Fancy my hearing that, especially, too, on the night of my parting with you! No, my darling, all I want you to have is hope,

hope and courage, and not too much ambition, dearest. Mine has been comparatively but a lotus-eating existence hitherto; to-morrow I begin the battle of life."

"But slightly armed for the conflict, my poor Walter!"

"I don't allow that, Marian. Youth, health, and energy are not bad weapons to have on one's side, and with your love in the background——"

"And the chance of achieving fame and fortune for yourself—keep that in the foreground!"

"That is to me, in every way, less than the other, but it is of course an additional spur. And now——"

And then? When two lovers are on the eve of parting, their conversation is scarcely very interesting to any one else. Marian and Walter talked the usual pleasant nonsense, and vowed the usual constancy, took four separate farewells of each other, and parted, with broken accents, and lingering hand-clasps, and streaming eyes. But when Marian Ashurst sat before her toilette-glass that night, in the room which had so long been her own, and which she was so soon to vacate, she thought of what Walter Joyce had said as to his future, and wondered whether, after all, she had not miscalculated the strength, not the courage, of the knight whom she had selected to wear her colours in his helm in the great contest.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD ONES.

It is a fact, concerning the soundness of which there can be no doubt, that we all keep by us, among our possessions, a considerable number of objects which we do not want, for which we have no possible use, which are very much in our way, and which we would be exceedingly glad to be rid of, if we only knew how. Some people, with little space at their disposal, have been so encumbered in this way with large accumulations of rubbish, inherited from many generations of collectors, that they have even been heard, after a day spent in futile attempts to deal with these unvalued possessions, to express, in the bitterness of their souls, a longing for a "judicious fire" to break out in the house. In default of that great comfort, it would be an excellent arrangement if a perambulating furnace could be brought round, at certain intervals, and moored for a time before our doors.

Incineration of this sort, however, is a way out of the difficulty only available in certain cases. Some kinds of rubbish are hardly suitable for burning. Metallic rubbish, earthenware rubbish, bone and ivory rubbish, old door

handles, disabled locks, bunches of obsolete keys, superseded door knockers, ancient jam pots, broken china figures, plaster casts without noses, empty ink jars, medicine bottles half full of mixture which was to be taken three times a day and wasn't, worn-out tooth-brush handles, knobs that have come off everything that could have a knob, handles of everything that could have a handle—handles of parasols, of button hooks, of butter knives, of paper knives, of water jugs, of tea pots. There are, besides such mere rubbish and refuse, certain objects which belong to most people, which are of some—occasionally of great—intrinsic value, but which we don't in the slightest degree appreciate, and secretly yearn to be delivered from. There is the pair of vases for the chimney-piece, which were given you on your marriage day, and which, entirely destroying the effect of your drawing-room, you have banished to a bedroom, where they are bitterly in the way. There is the set of dining-room chairs, bought by yourself, with your eyes open, when you paid away hard money—and a good deal of it—in order that you might become possessed of what you detest from the bottom of your soul. There is that claret-coloured surtout, which will not answer at all, and which is not likely to wear out, because you never put it on; also, the pair of unmentionables, the material of which, when they were brought home, turned out to be so much more violent in colour than it looked in the tailor's pattern-book. What are you to do with such things as these? You cannot burn a whole set of dining-room chairs, or a claret-coloured surtout; and you don't like the idea of selling them, because, if it got about, your friends would at once come to the conclusion that you were on the eve of bankruptcy, and so your social position might suffer. What are you to do?

What you are to do is simply this: You are to advertise in a journal called *The Exchange and Mart*. You are to advertise that you are willing to barter these objects which are harassing the life out of you, for certain other objects, which you specify, and which are equally harrowing to their present proprietor.

The Exchange and Mart is a weekly periodical, which has been in existence something over six months. The object with which this journal has been started may be best explained by a quotation from the first page of the work itself:

"*THE EXCHANGE AND MART JOURNAL*" has been established to provide a medium between the seller and buyer, and at a very cheap rate to enable any one who wishes to dispose of any article, either by exchange or by sale, to do so to the very best advantage.

It will be desirable to give a short explanation of our scheme, so that intending advertisers may the more easily avail themselves of the advantages we offer.

First, let us suppose a person wishing to effect an exchange through our columns, he will write to the editor thus: Sir, I wish to make the following exchange (*Here follows the list of articles to be exchanged*), for which I enclose—stamps (enclosing the number of stamps as per regulations). If the advertiser chooses to add his own name and address, he can of course do

so; but supposing he should wish to keep it secret, he will then send us his name and address, and we shall attach a number to his advertisement, in place of his name, and all letters answering his advertisement will therefore be addressed to that number at our office. In addition to this, the advertiser can, if he wish, send the article advertised for exchange to our office on view. The same rules apply to the department of "*The Mart*," with this addition, that a charge of five per cent will be made on all articles sold at our office. As to the department of "*Wants and Vacancies*," the desirability of having some organ where servants and masters can be brought into communication at a merely nominal cost, is too obvious to need demonstration.

It will be seen here that not only do the originators of this scheme take the interests of their clients very much to heart, but that great consideration for their feelings is also exhibited, and ample provision made for that tendency to shrink from observation which ever besets the amateur seller, and which we see provided against by the pawnbroking fraternity in the shape of those private doors round the corner, always inseparable from such of their establishments as are found in our genteeler neighbourhoods.

Some plain directions to intending advertisers follow:

Let us now proceed to point out the course to be pursued by any persons answering the advertisements; and first as regards "*The Exchange*." The person answering an advertisement of Exchange must enclose that answer, stamped, and with the distinguishing number of the advertisement clearly written upon the top of it, under cover to the editor of *THE EXCHANGE AND MART*, who will thus bring the two parties into communication. The same course of procedure applies to "*The Mart*."

To ensure that the advertisement should be widely seen, we guarantee a minimum circulation of ten thousand weekly."

That last "guarantee" is a bold one, and shows that the proprietors of the undertaking regard the class which is ready to fly to ills it knows not of, rather than to endure those which it has, as rather a large one. And, indeed, judging from the advertisements which fill more than a dozen large columns of this wonderful journal, it would seem to be so. It is pathetic to observe how—the means of making their miseries known having at length come in their way—the proprietors of all sorts of detested objects hurry forward in search of deliverance from their passive tormentors. The present writer once went to see the "*Home for Lost and Starving Dogs*;" and as soon as he appeared in the yard, every one of those poor ownerless wretches rushed headlong to the bars behind which they were confined, each imagining that his especial proprietor had at last turned up. So with these advertisers. They were pining hopeless among those fatal possessions, when suddenly the proprietors of *The Exchange and Mart* appeared on the scene with signals of deliverance; and instantly the advertisers flung themselves at their feet, frantic with gratitude and hope. "*Rescue me from this concertina, which I can't play!*" cries one. "*Deliver me from this statuette, the sight of which is killing me by inches!*" shrieks another. "*This gun,*" groans a third, "*with*

which I have never shot anything! Remove it from above my chimney-piece, and take a load from my heart!"

The advertisers who seek to make their wants known through the pages of *The Exchange* and *Mart*, seem to possess many characteristics in common. The same articles appear to be popular and unpopular with them. They all want sealskin jackets and sewing-machines, and none of them want incomplete pieces of Berlin wool work, and "boxes of oil paints nearly new." There is, by the way, a very brisk desire to get rid of these last, suggesting the idea that a considerable proportion of the advertisers have been the victims of a false impression that they had a vocation for art. Sometimes the revulsion of feeling brought about by the acquirement of these "paints" is very strong indeed, as in the case of an advertiser in the twentieth number of *The Exchange*, who suddenly discovers, after cultivating for a brief space the peaceful arts that soften men's manners, a certain blood-thirsty tendency, at once incongruous and terrible. "I have," says this gentleman, "an oil-paint box almost complete, and *very little used*. I want a small breech-loading revolver."

Among the characteristics shared in common by the clients of the *Exchange* journal must be noted a wonderful and touching hopefulness. They are so inexplicably sanguine. They see nothing outrageous in the idea of getting new lamps for old ones. The lamps they have to dispose of are very old ones, and they know it. The wares they offer for competition are, for the most part, no doubt, defective, imperfect, and disappointing; yet they expect that the objects which they are to get in exchange for them are to possess none of those qualities. Here is a wonderful instance of this hopefulness. It is headed "GOATS!"

"Three pure white Sicilian goats to be exchanged for a lock-stitch sewing-machine, Wilson preferred, in perfect condition."

A gentleman or lady possessed of a sewing-machine, by the best maker, *in perfect condition*, is expected to part with it, and to receive in return—three terrible goats! Is this a thing likely to happen? Is it likely, again, that the advertiser who has "a fine tame fox, which he wishes to exchange for a gold watch or guard," will meet with a customer? Or that the proprietor of an ivory card-case is to be able to exchange it, or "two pieces of Chinese and Japanese embroidery" for a "Cleopatra" or a "Wanzer" sewing-machine, in good order?

These sewing-machines are in continual request. In one copy of *The Exchange* there are no less than eleven advertisements for these useful articles, for which the most various and incongruous things—guitars, celestial and terrestrial globes, bantam cocks, and magic lanterns, among the rest—are offered in exchange.

This incongruity between the object offered and that which is advertised for, is another of the curiosities of advertisement which the new journal supplies us with. Besides such instances as have been already mentioned, we find such

notices as the following, in plenty: "Butterdish of carved white wood, with green glass centre, quite new, never used, cost eight shillings and sixpence. To exchange for Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*; or a pair of lady's skates, or a round brass American clock, or a carved fretwork brooch, or Tennyson's poems." "I will give forty pencil drawings," says one advertiser, "all good, some excellent, for twelve pounds of good honey!" "Raising the Maypole, quite new," says another; "size, forty inches by thirty inches. Wanted *blankets*, or offers." Another advertiser wishes to change a pair of archery targets for a good guitar; another, to become possessed of a small revolver in place of Knight's *Natural History*; another to exchange a handsome lever gold watch and seals, for—a cow!

Among the remarkable points to which one's attention is frequently drawn in considering these notices, is the exceeding popularity of sealskin. The advertisements for sealskin jackets, sealskin muffs, sealskin waistcoats, sealskin purses, follow one another in close succession, and are even more numerous than those for sewing-machines. Neither do the owners of the former, any more than the latter, appear to tire of such possessions, or wish to be rid of them. There are no instances of advertisers wishing to part, either with sealskin jackets or sewing-machines.

Occupying ourselves still with the especial peculiarities developed in the columns of this curious periodical, one cannot help noticing what a rare quality accuracy and intelligibility in written description is. This is manifested by the *Exchange* advertisers, both in describing the objects they wish to part with, and those of which they desire to become possessed. Thus, there are advertisers who announce their possession of a "very good long thick watch-chain," without specifying of what metal it is composed; others, who are in want of a yard "or so" of piece silk; others, who yearn for a large new album, "to hold four in a page"—four what? Some of the descriptions, too, are very minute in detail, and some characterised by a certain conscientiousness. A set of steel ornaments, for instance, which are "slightly rusty," are advertised; and a lace shawl, a "little soiled;" while one advertiser, in her desire to be strictly honest, enters into quite a little narrative of the autobiographical sort: "I have," she says, "a good bracelet, bought at the Exhibition in '62. I do not know of what metal it is made, but I think it cannot be plated, as I have worn one bought at the same time, a great deal, and it has not in the least turned colour."

Some people are possessed of very hopeless goods indeed, and seem to be perfectly conscious of their unfortunate position. Here is an unhappy case: "I have ten gross of plate-powder, each in packet boxes. I wish to exchange for anything useful. Open to offers." And here another: "I have about a hundred different, mostly freethought, pamphlets, average price sixpence, which I would exchange for anything useful worth a guinea."

The strange phenomena, connected with the stamp-collecting mania, are among the peculiarities developed in these pages. Extraordinary revelations are made, of the patience and perseverance exhibited by "collectors" of this kind. Some of these advertise, for exchange, books containing upwards of five hundred stamps, foreign and colonial, or eight hundred postmarks in an album. Is it conceivable that anybody can want eight hundred postmarks? Another collector offers "a book with double clasps, containing one thousand and seventy arms, crests, and monograms, all coloured; Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, arms of all nations, county arms, nearly all the army, militia, volunteer, schools, &c." There are, likewise, strange and terrible treasures of the monogram and stamp kind, and some very mysterious matters indeed, which are called "eccentrics." Here is a fearfully mystifying announcement: "I have twenty military badges, and Adam and Eve eccentric, to exchange for others; or would give two badges for Tom Dawson's cat, Miss Senhouse, Miss Charlton's fan, Mr. Milbank's eccentric." Mr. Tom Dawson's cat is the subject of another advertisement, and is evidently a much prized and well-known specimen among "eccentrics."

Through the agency of the department of this Periodical, called the "Exchange," persons encumbered may get a different set of objects more suitable to their wants; while another department of the Journal, "The Mart," affords them a chance of turning these same unappreciated wares into money. It is probably a good thing that such a system as this should be in existence, for even if the parties to these transactions do not acquire any very valuable additions to the number of their possessions, they at least get a change in the nature of their encumbrances, and that is something. For, even if you skip out of the frying-pan into the fire, it must still be admitted that you do get a change, and perhaps—though the general opinion seems to run the other way—a change not altogether for the worse.

THE HALL PORTER AT THE CLUB.

"How long, good friend, have you sat here,
A warder at the door,
To let none pass but the elect
Into the inner floor?"—

"I think 'tis thirty years at least;
I came in manly prime,
And now I'm growing frail and old,
And feel the touch of Time.

"Many's the change that I have seen
Since first I entered here;
A thousand merry gentlemen
Were members in that year.
And of the thousand there remain
Scarce fifty that I know,
And they are growing old like me,
And hobble as they go.

"Seven hundred underneath the sod,
The great, the rich, the free;—
A hundred fallen on evil days,
Too poor to pay the fee.

Fifty resigned because their wives
Forbade them to remain;—
And half a score went moody mad
From overwork of brain.

"And two committed suicide,—
One for a faithless wife,
And one for fear to face the law
That could not take his life.
But why run o'er the mournful list?
Each month that passes round,
Sees some old leaf from this old tree
Fall fluttering to the ground.

"And you, my friend, who question me,
Are young, and hale, and strong,
You'll have such memories as mine
If you but live as long!"—

"Well! well! I know! Why moralise?
Or go in search of sorrow?
Here's half a crown to drink my health;
And better luck to-morrow!"

MY VERSION OF POOR JACK.

THE "Poor Jack" of whom I write is not a sailor, though perhaps for him also, as well as for the Poor Jack whom Charles Dibdin has immortalised, there may be a sweet little cherub sitting up aloft. My Poor Jack is a landsman, and, although he will not admit the fact, a beggar. There is this much to be said for his denial of the truth, that he is to a certain extent a trader, and that in the summer months and the early autumn he does a certain amount of profitable business—profitable from his humble point of view, though never sufficiently remunerative to enable him to deal with either the tailor or the shoemaker. His whole attire is eleemosynary, and his raggedness, though doubtless very uncomfortable to himself, is exceedingly picturesque, and might, if any good artist happened to fall in with him, procure for him the honour of a sitting, and such reward in silver as the pose might be worth. Jack is sixty-five years of age, and has a large handsome brown beard, striped rather than sprinkled with grey. Though I have known him for three or four years, I never saw him but once without his hat on—a very battered and tattered one it is—and then I discovered that his beard was the only hirsuteness he could exhibit, and that, in fact, his head was as bald and devoid of hair as a basin. His elbows peep out from his sleeves, and his toes from his miserable old shoes, and his general raggedness is as looped and windowed as that which Lear pitied and Shakespeare described. In his youth Poor Jack was a carpenter, but he has not done a stroke of carpenter's work for upwards of forty years, having, as he says, been disabled at five-and-twenty by

rheumatism in his right shoulder and hand and in both of his feet—rheumatism so long neglected or so imperfectly treated as to have become chronic and incurable. Having no money to set up a shop, and no friends to help him, he had betaken himself to the road to live by what he could pick up; not perhaps without reliance upon the sweet little cherub already mentioned, or on the Providence that takes account of men as well as of sparrows.

Poor Jack called upon me a few weeks ago with a basket of mushrooms that he had gathered in the fields, having a standing commission from me to give me the first offer of these dainties whenever he can find sufficient for a dish. The last time I had seen him prior to this visit, was about six weeks previously, when I had come across him in a byway, sitting by the side of a ditch, and very drunk indeed. I reminded him (perhaps unnecessarily) of the fact, but as I had bought his mushrooms at a good price, he was not offended.

"Yes," said he, "I remember; I was main drunk. I think I was never so drunk in all my life before. It was with *champagne*."

"Champagne?" I repeated incredulously.

"Yes, champagne; and not bad stuff neither, though it did make me uncommon ill."

Jack went on to explain that there had been a large pic-nic party upon the hill that day, at which nearly two hundred people were present, dispersed in groups under the trees. As attendance upon pic-nics is part of his regular business, he was, as he said, "to the fore" on this occasion, to take his chance either of being ruthlessly driven away, as he sometimes is for his utter incongruity with surrounding circumstances, or of being employed, as he mostly is, in some way or other, or of obtaining a share of the broken victuals and remnants of the feast. Jack had been plashing about all the morning in the little river that winds and murmurs under the hill-side, and had the large basket, which is usually slung at his back, filled with fresh forget-me-nots, which he had gathered on the banks of the stream. Young ladies—romantic little dears!—love the forget-me-not more for its name than for its beauty, and Jack's venture among the merry-makers with such an abundant supply of a flower so suggestive to love-makers proved to be a success. One young gentleman gave him a shilling for a bunch, which he forthwith presented to a young lady, and such a desire for forget-me-nots

took possession of all the other ladies, young and old, that the gentlemen in attendance, as in gallantry and duty bound, made all haste to gratify their wishes. The consequence was that Jack's forget-me-nots were speedily sold at highly remunerative prices, and he found himself in possession of nearly twelve shillings. "It was the best day's work I ever did in my life," said Jack; "nor was this all. Pic-nic people, though they generally bring plenty of wine, ale, or ginger-beer with them, always manage to forget to bring water; and this party had not a drop. One of the ladies asked me if I could get some, and a gentleman sitting next to her on the grass offered to give me a bottle of champagne in exchange for six bottles of cold pump water. They had the water, and I had the wine. I had heard of champagne, but I had never tasted a drop in my life. They all laughed to see me drinking it. Let them laugh as wins, thought I, as I sat under a tree by myself, and drank out of the bottle."

"You liked it, of course?"

"Liked it! It was glorious, and did me a power of good; leastways, I think it would have done if I had stuck to the one bottle. But I amused the gentlemen, I suppose, and made fun for them, so they gave me more, and more again upon the top of that, till my head began to spin and swim, and I felt that I was going to be very unwell. How I got away I don't remember, but I was main ill, and after a while I fell asleep where you saw me. When I woke it was pitch dark, and I heard the church clock at Darkham strike three in the morning."

"Darkham," said I; "where's that? You mean Dorking."

"No," replied Jack, very dictatorially, and as if sure of his point. "Some people say Dorking, others say Darking, I say *Darkham*."

Jack had begun to interest me, for if I have a favourite hobby it is philology, and I had long had a suspicion that the modern name of this pretty little town was not the correct one.

"Did you ever hear any one else call it Darkham?"

"Yes, my father and my mother, and scores of people. There is Mickleham, and Effingham, and Brockham, and Bookham, and *Darkham*, all in a string, as I might say."

"Have you any idea what Darkham means? Bookham means the home among the beech-trees, Brockham the home by

the brook, Mickleham the great home, and Effingham is probably Upping home; but what is Darkham?"

"The dark home," said Jack, as if the question were settled.

"No, that's not it, though I think you may be right about the name. Darag or Darach is the old Celtic for oak, and Darkham is the home among the oak-trees."

"You've got it now," said Jack. "That's it for sartain."

I have had many talks with Jack, and have taken considerable interest in his humble fortunes. As soon as the leaves fall from the trees and the nights begin to grow cold and frosty, Jack retires from the busy world into his winter palace. That palace is the workhouse, or rather the workhouse infirmary; for Jack cannot work if he would, and his rheumatism or poor man's gout—he does not exactly know to which of the two names his inveterate malady is properly entitled—requires the treatment that none but the parish doctor and the parish funds will supply. But as soon as the cuckoo is heard in the woods, Jack, after a hybernation which he has shared with the flies, the bees, the dormice, and other of God's creatures, which are mercifully permitted to sleep all through the season when no food is to be found for them, emerges once again into the light of day to ply his vocation. He looks so very miserable, and so picturesque, that many kind-hearted people stop him on the road, and give him either of their own poverty or of their riches the wherewithal to make himself a little more comfortable. But he never asks for charity. For this reason he denies being a beggar—a figment, a white lie, a suppressio veri, whatever it may be called, which does no harm to anybody, while it administers very sensibly to the little pride that the world and old age and hard struggles have left in him. It is his wish to earn an honest subsistence, and he does his best in that direction, and with a very patient, humble, and uncomplaining spirit. The first objects of his solicitude as soon as he is emancipated from his winter thralldom are the primrose roots and flowers, with which he drives his small bargains in the towns and villages with people who want to ornament their little front gardens or their cottage windows, and which he sells for what he can get—for a penny or a halfpenny a root, or for a piece of bread, or, better still, for a pair of old boots or shoes, or any cast-off garment that may be too ragged for the poorest of the poor, but which is not utterly valueless, to

such as he. He also collects herbs, or, as he calls them, "yarbs," either for the garden or for the use of the poor people and the notable housewives among them, who have faith in simples for his treatment and cure of burns and scalds or other simple maladies. Though, unlike Milton's herbalist, he cannot

Ope his leathern scrip,

And show us simples of a thousand names,

he can display some dozens of varieties in his basket, and can tell what they were supposed to be good for. One day he got an order from a village apothecary for cartloads of groundsel, if he could collect as much, and was busy on the job for a whole fortnight. It was wanted for a military hospital for the purpose of making poultices. But he never received so extensive an order again. Ferns and orchids were other sources of income, and last, but by no means the least, were watercresses and mushrooms. Jack has no faith in the new-fangled ideas about mushrooms, and does not believe that there is more than one kind in England that is edible. "Mushrooms," said he, with a conservatism strongly opposed to the radicalism of the present day, that will not allow us our ancient faith even in fungi, "have been growing in the English meadows for a thousand years, and if there were more than one sort good for eating, do you think our grandfathers and their grandfathers would not have found it out? No, no!" he added, with strong emphasis, "there is only one mushroom: all the others are toadstools: and I won't believe otherwise if all the doctors in England says the contrary."

There is a suspicion afloat, that in his early manhood, and when he first took to the road, Jack got into trouble, and was had before a justice of the peace for poaching. But the suspicion is too vague and shadowy to merit much notice. I have tried more than once to get him on the subject of the Game Laws, as affecting people in his circumstances and the rural population generally; but he has always evaded it, and expressed no opinion, or even made a remark, except "that he did not understand about that." Jack can read, and has a small, dog's-eared, and very shabby-looking and well-thumbed Bible, which he carries in his basket, and reads every Sunday in the fields, out of the public path somewhere, when the weather is fine, and he has enough bread-and-cheese or scraps of victuals in his pocket to serve for his dinner. He never goes to church in the summer when he is a free man, having been, he

says, turned from the door of a church some years ago by the beadle, who told him he was much too dirty to come in. "Perhaps what he said was true," observed Jack, when he told me the circumstance; "but I thought all the same, that I might have been allowed to go into a corner. Howsomever, I went away, and sat upon a tombstone to rest myself out of the beadle's sight, and hear the organ play, and thought that, maybe, when I was put under the mould, I might be as clean as Mr. Beadle or Mr. Parson, or any of the grand folks in the pews! And I think so still, though, as I said, it was a good many years ago, and I was not so near the mould as I am now." But though Jack avoids church in summer, he regularly attends the service in the Union during the winter months, and seems, from the manner in which he speaks of the sermons he hears, to be quite as good a Christian as his betters, who "fare sumptuously every day."

The last time I saw Jack he was on his way to the union workhouse for the winter, when he showed me the ticket of admission duly signed by the relieving officer.

"I am afraid," he said, "I shall not come out again; though I shall be glad to see the primroses and hear the cuckoo once more. I don't think I have been a very bad man, though once, and only once in my life, I had a pheasant for dinner."

I thought Jack was going to talk about that poaching business at last; but he hesitated, and pulled up suddenly.

"No! I have not been a very bad man; and if I have not worked as hard as other people, it is because I have not been able to work."

"Well, Jack!" I said, "your life has been a hard one, I have no doubt. But I never knew much harm of you; and I suppose that, like the rest of us, you have had your joys as well as your sorrows."

"There was a young woman," he said—but he did *not* wipe his eye with his cuff, nor whimper—"who was very fond of me, and she died when I was twenty and she was eighteen. Since that time the best things I have known in the world have been the sunshine and the warm weather. It is very hard to be poor, and lonely, and cold. Cold, as far as I know, is the worst of all—worse than hunger; at least I've found it so. And if it were not for the cold, I don't think I'd go to the Union at all, but would try and jog along in the winter as I do in the summer."

Poor Jack, it will be seen, though he has

a certain amount of pride, has not a very high spirit—how could he have, with such a hopeless battle to fight?—and by no means despises the workhouse, or thinks it derogatory to his manly dignity as some of the hard-working poor do, to depend upon it for assistance. Without its kindly hand, however, he would doubtless die in the cold December—of "serum on the brain," as the parish doctors have lately taken to call starvation. So small blame be to him for going into it when he must, and for coming out of it when he can. In spite of his last fit of despondency, I hope to see the old fellow out again in the spring, along with his favourite primroses, listening to the cuckoo, gathering simples, and drawing such comfort out of the sunshine as Diogenes may have done, but without the misanthropy, that perhaps was not real, even with Diogenes.

AS THE CROW FLIES.

DUE WEST. HOUNSLOW HEATH.

[We purpose, in a rapid series of papers, to fly with the crow in various directions from London, and take a bird's-eye view of the roads as they have been.]

SWIFT in a phantom mail coach, the ghosts of four "spankers" whirl us along the great west road. The phantom guard blows a faint blast on his phantom horn as we dash down the long dingy street of Brentford, and sweep on with whizzing wheels between the broad nursery gardens. Here and there, a ladder reared against the fruit tree boughs, shows where the last russets and leather jackets have just been picked for all-devouring London. Faster, through Brentford, where the ghosts of Hogarth's time seem for ever grouped around the doorway of that quaint inn, The London Apprentice. On past the river almshouses and the little garden by which the dark barge sails flit; on between the rows of shops and the gables of the small town at the Duke's Gate, and we are at Hounslow and on legendary ground.

Were we magicians we should at once call together the dispersed atoms of the highwaymen who rattled in chains above the Hounslow furze bushes. From the roots of the fir trees, and the earth beneath the brambles, from the flints of the road side and the water of the rivulets, we would collect the fragments of the wicked bodies, until once more the "Captain" who swore "by the bones of Jerry Abershaw" should appear in his black mask, gold-laced cocked hat, and scarlet roquelaure, with his silver "pops" in his deep pockets, bestriding his chesnut mare, the bold and reckless rascal of the pleasant days when thirteen gibbets stood at one time near Bason Bridge on the road to Heston. Yes! Thirteen shapeless bundles, dangled at one time in view of the wayfarer across the terrible heath, in the beginning of this century. It was an old joke against Lord Islay, who once

lived at Hounslow, that, on his ordering his gardener to cut an avenue to open a view, the perspective disclosed a gibbet with a thief on it, and that several members of the Campbell family having died with their shoes on, the prospect revived such ominous and unpleasant reminiscences that Lord Islay instantly ordered the prospect to be closed again with a clump of thick Scotch firs.

If any highwayman who galloped to the gallops a century ago, could see Hounslow Heath now, he would wonder where the four thousand acres that covered fourteen parishes had shrunk to. He would find only a few dozen acres of grass field enclosed for the cavalry reviews on one side of the road, and a few dozen acres of rough furze and bramble on the other for cavalry drill. Local historians say that the heath was once an oak forest that spread its green boughs from Staines to Brentford, and there is an old tradition that the last wolf killed, centuries ago now, was hunted down at Perry Oaks, near Feltham Hill.

In Charles the First's time Hounslow contained one hundred and twenty houses, chiefly inns and ale-houses relying on travellers. It was always indeed dependent on the coaches of the great west road. Every third house is still an inn or a beer shop. Ruined stables, faded signs of the Marquis of Granby and other bygone celebrities, still testify to the old prosperity of the place, when the Comet used to come flashing in, five minutes under the hour, from Piccadilly.

Let us sketch the Comet of the old days. Tom Brown, the coachman, allows only fifty seconds for changing horses—smart's the word with him. Tom in the neat white hat, the clean doeskin gloves, the well cut trousers and dapper frock—we quote a contemporaneous portrait—is the pink of Jarvies. The coach is a strong, well-built, canary-coloured drag: a bull's head on the doors: a Saracen's head on the hind boot. It carries fourteen passengers and goes ten miles an hour, guaranteed pace. There is a big bell-mouthed blunderbuss, ready for the Turpin boys; there are two pistols in the cases; there is a lamp on each side the coach, and another gleams out under the foot-board. In fifty seconds three greys and a piebald have replaced the three chesnuts and a bay.

The ostler fastens the last buckle; the coachman's foot is already on the roller bolt.

"How is Paddy's leg?" he asks, as he settles down to his seat and shakes out the reins.

"Nearly right, sir," replies the horse-keeper, twitching off the last cloth.

"Let 'em go, then," says the great artist, "and take care of yourselves."

The spankers strike out and away they go, over what coachmen used to call "the hospital ground," from Hounslow to Staines. The coachman generally *sprang* his cattle over this bit of level, where there was no pebble bigger than a nutmeg. They kept for it all the "box-kickers" and stiff-mouthed old platers, whose backs would not hold an ounce down hill or draw an ounce up—queer tempered creatures, that were

over the pole one day and over the bars the next. So they used to flash past the Scotch firs where Mr. Steele was murdered, and the pond where Mr. Mellish was killed, and by the turn where Courthorpe Knatchbull beat off the four scoundrels, and the place where Turpin, according to Mr. Samuel Weller, let fly at the bishop's too hasty coachman:

And just put a couple of balls in his nob,
And perwailed on him to stop.

The crow takes note, upon the wing, of a pretty tradition of Hounslow which addresses itself to the human heart. During those cruel wars that brought the king's army and the parliamentarians alternately to encamp on Hounslow Heath, one Mr. George Trevelyan, a cavalier gentleman of Nettlecomb, in Somersetshire, and suspected of plotting against Cromwell, was seized by puritan soldiers, and sent close prisoner to the Tower. His captors, took care, moreover, to burn and destroy all of his property that they could, and, above all, drove off with them from the stables and fields of Nettlecomb and its neighbourhood, every horse that would mount a dragon, or drag a cannon, or a baggage waggon. They left the old house beggared, ransacked, and defaced, and rode off singing their sullen psalms. Heaven and earth was moved for Trevelyan's release by his devoted wife; but Cromwell, bent on breaking such stubborn spirits, would not listen to any less ransom than two thousand pounds. But where to get it? The faithful steward racked his brains, and the poor wife wrought and prayed ceaselessly in her great need. Farms were sold, old oaks were felled, dear heirlooms were beaten down for the goldsmith and the Jews; above all, as the old record especially notes, "the great Barley Mow" was taken to market. The two thousand gold pieces were at last spread by the delighted steward before the eyes of the tearful wife. The difficulty now, was, how to get the bags of gold safe up to London, and escape the hungry highwaymen of Bagshot and Hounslow, the rapacious constables of hostile towns, and the stray snatchers in inn yards? At last Heaven sent a thought to her heart. She had heard of rough roads where ladies had harnessed strong draught oxen to the cumbrous family coaches, to drag them through the sloughs and deep-rutted lanes to some great dance or solemn assembly. The horses were all gone for miles round. The thought was at once turned to action. The great "gold" coach was provisioned for the long journey, the faithful steward, true as steel, accompanied the loving wife; and they took twenty-eight days doing the hundred and sixty miles. The dark prison doors flew open. The loving wife flew into the arms of her free husband. But she sickened of small-pox at Hounslow—the first halting place for the swift homeward horses as it had been the last for the slow oxen—and she died breathing the name which had been the watchword of her great devotion. She was buried at Hounslow, on the site of the home of the old Brotherhood

of the Trinity, who had devoted their lives to the redeeming of captives; and in the church a simple tablet still exists to her memory, recording only the fact of her burial and the names of her children.

From the earliest records, Hounslow Heath was a notorious ride for highwaymen. Whether it was on this heath that Claude Duval, really made the knight's lady dance a coranto, and then charged the husband a hundred pounds for it, may be uncertain; but it is certain that Captain Hind, who tried to stop Cromwell, and who did rob Bradshaw and Harrison, infested this wild common. The gallant captain was eventually hung at Worcester, and his head was set up, as a scarecrow to gentlemen of his kidney, over the bridge gate. Hind fought for the king at Worcester, and when the hue and cry was hot after him, artfully and daringly came to London, called himself Brown, changed his wig, dyed his face, and took lodgings at a barber's opposite St. Dunstan's Church; but the worthless barber betrayed the gallant rogue, who swung for it.

There was seldom great daring in the robberies of the highwaymen. They were but poor humbugs. They had houses of intelligence; they had ostlers, drivers of waggons and packhorses, innkeepers, barmaids, turnpike men, and carriers, in their pay. They did not attack armed travellers if they could help it, and when they did so they generally did it by surprise or by force of numbers. They obtained heavy purses and rich boxes of plate, but they had to cast money away by handfuls to their spies and to the constables who tolerated them or aided their escapes. Wild drinking and gambling were the desperate reactions from their dangers and their days of starvation and short commons. Then came the gallops, the short cuts, the flying of gates and brooks, the fording of rivers, to get by moonlight to Hounslow: with every bridle path, and field, and hedge of which district every highwayman was familiar. Then they dashed up to some coach and exchanged shots, or they rammed their pistols through the glass windows, and frightened the ladies into fits, and the men into submission. The watch was drawn from the boot, the jewels from under the cushions; they tossed the spoil into their deep pannier pockets, cursed, threatened, and dashed off. Then eventually they were leaped on in some brandy shop parlour, or were torn down in a savage hue and cry, or were felled by some despairing man, or were betrayed by some jealous mistress. Next came the hard jury and the steel-faced judge, the dim stone room, the staring faces of quidnuncs and heartless men of fashion, the last revel with the turnkey and perhaps the chaplain (for those were odd times), then the unriveting of the fetters, the presentation of the nose-gay, the bellman's mechanical verses, and the grim ride backward up Holborn-hill to Tyburn.

In the reign of William and Mary, Hounslow trembled at the name of Whitney, who, like his successor, Turpin, began life as a butcher. He then kept an inn in Hertfordshire. The

best story told of him is that he plundered a gentleman named Long of a hundred pounds in silver. The traveller represented that he had far to go, and did not know where to get money on the road. Whitney at once opened the bag and handed it to him. Long could not resist the opportunity, and drew out a brimming handful. Whitney did not remonstrate, but only said with a smile, as he rode off: "I thought you would have had more conscience, sir." Whitney was at last trapped in a house in Milford-lane, and died in his shoes at a place called Porter's Block, near Smithfield. He was only thirty-four; highwaymen seldom attained old age.

Some heroes get their fame very undeservedly. This is especially the case with Mr. Richard Turpin, who was but a mean and cruel sort of thief, let alone a murderer. He was an Essex butcher, who turned housebreaker, and he and his gang had a cave in Epping Forest, where they and their horses lay in ambuscade. The street ballad writer of 1739 wrote:

On Hounslow Heath, as I rode o'er,
I spied a lawyer riding before.
"Kind, sir," said I, "arn't you afraid
Of Turpin, that mischievous blade?"

O rare Turpin, hero! O rare Turpin, O!

Says Turpin, "He'll ne'er find me out;
I've hid my money in my boot."

"Oh," says the lawyer, "there's none can find
My gold, for it's stitched in my cape behind."

O, rare Turpin, &c.

As they rode down by the Powder Mill,
Turpin commands them to stand still.
Said he, "Your cape I must cut off,
For my mare she wants a saddle cloth."

This caused the lawyer much to fret,
To think he was so fairly bet;
And Turpin robbed him of his store,
Because he knew he'd lie for more.

It is a curious trait of the times that Turpin was allowed to hold half an hour's conversation with the hangman before he took his leap from the ladder.

John Hawkins, one of the wretches that fed the Hounslow crows in 1722, was the greatest robber of mail coaches on record. He stole the bags of five mail coaches in one morning, of two the next day, and of one the next. His gang of thieves were even so audacious as to stop coaches in Chancery-lane and Lincoln's Inn-fields. They used to go and dine at the Three Pigeons at Brentford: then ride on about six in the evening to the Post House at Hounslow, or to Colnbrook, where they would inquire at what hour the mails were due.

It was by no means uncommon for ruined gamblers and bankrupt tradesmen to take a moonlit ride to the heath to retrieve their shattered fortunes, and in 1750, it is on record that William Parson, the wild son of a baronet, and who had been brought up at Eton, and had been in both the navy and army, committed a robbery on the fatal heath, after his return from transportation, and was hung there in chains to scare the night riders.

But travellers had their artifices as well as highwaymen. Men of audacity, when stopped,

had sometimes the effrontery to pretend to be fellow thieves, and were allowed to pass toll free. On one occasion a bold officer in the army, forewarned that the coach would be stopped, hid himself in the *basket*, and on two highwaymen riding up, shot one through the head, and drove off the other. In later times, Townshend, the celebrated Bow-street runner, used often to ride as an armed escort before coaches conveying government money. Townshend was a little fat man, who wore a flaxen wig, kerseymere breeches, a blue straight cut coat, and a broad-brimmed white hat. He was daring, dexterous, and cunning; and his merits, manners, and odd sayings were much relished by the royal family. On one occasion, Townshend having to escort a carriage to Reading, took with him his friend Joe Manton, the celebrated gunmaker, who was fond of adventure, and as brave as a lion. Soon after reaching Hounslow, three foot-pads stopped the coach, and Joe was just going to draw trigger, when Townshend cried out, "Stop, Joe; don't fire! Let me talk to the gentlemen." A glimpse of the moon revealed Townshend's dreaded figure to the thieves, who instantly took to their heels; but he had already recognised them. In a few days his rough and ready hand was on their collars, and they were soon tried and packed off to Botany Bay.

There is a legend at Hounslow that a certain Bishop of Raphoe was shot on the heath, being mistaken for a highwayman. John Rann (alias Sixteen-string Jack) acquired a name, about 1774, at which Hounslow postilions trembled. This fellow had been coachman to Lord Sandwich, who then lived at the south-east corner of Bedford-row, and he acquired his singular name by wearing breeches with eight strings at either knee, to record the number of his acquittals. He was a handsome impudent fellow, much admired by his companions; and he is described as swaggering at Bagnigge-wells in a scarlet coat, deep-flapped tambour waistcoat, white silk stockings, and laced hat. He drank freely there, lost, with extreme nonchalance, a hundred-guinea diamond ring, and openly boasted that he was a highwayman, and could replace the lost jewel by one evening's work. He once showed himself at Barnet races in a blue satin waistcoat trimmed with silver, and was followed by an admiring crowd. He even had the matchless impudence to attend a Tyburn execution, and push his way through a ring of constables, saying that he was just the sort of man who ought to have a good place, as he himself might figure there some day. Just before he was taken for robbing Mr. Devall near the ninth milestone on the Hounslow road, he had stopped Dr. Bell, the chaplain to the Princess Amelia, and taken from him eighteenpence and an old watch. This fellow used to boast that Sir John Fielding's people always used him very genteelly; consequently if they held up a finger he would follow them as quiet as a lamb. When brought before Sir John, Rann wore a bundle of flowers as big as a broom in the breast of his coat, and had his irons tied up tastefully with blue ribbons. At

his trial he appeared in a pea-green suit, a ruffled shirt, and a hat bound round with silver strings. He gave a supper a few nights before his execution. An intelligent observer, who saw the cart pass the end of John-street with Rann in it, bound for Tyburn, describes him in his pea-green coat, carrying, as he sat by his coffin, with the chaplain reading prayers to him, an enormous nosegay, presented, according to custom, from the steps of St. Sepulchre's Church. Nothing in life, however, so well became Sixteen-string Jack as the leaving it; for he died penitently, not like desperate Abershaw, who, on mounting the gibbet so long eager for him, kicked his shoes off among the crowd, and leaped savagely into another world.

It is interesting to remember that the first suggestion of Gay's *Beggars' Opera* was a remark of Swift's, as he sat with his friends, one day in Pope's villa at Twickenham. Hounslow Heath then spread within a quarter of a mile of Twickenham, and Pope must often have seen flying highwaymen chase past the door. Fielding, writing in 1775, does not say much for the moral tone of the Hounslow population at that time. He describes a captain of the Guards, who, being robbed on Hounslow Heath, as soon as the highwayman left, unharnessed a horse, mounted it, and pursued the fellow, at noon day, through Hounslow town, shouting, "Highwayman! Highwayman!" but no one joined in the pursuit.

There was always blood, bad or good, being spilled on Hounslow Heath; in 1802 a terrible crime, for a long time hidden in mystery, threw a darker gloom over the gibbet ground. Mr. Steele, a lavender merchant, in Catherine-street, Strand, who had a house and nursery-garden at Feltham, left town for Feltham on the afternoon of the fifth of November. About seven o'clock on the evening of the sixth, he left Feltham, on his way back to town, wearing a round hat, almost new, half boots, and a great coat. He was never seen again alive. About a quarter past eight, the driver of the Gosport coach, about ten minutes after having changed horses at Hounslow, and when between some trees near the powder mills and the eleventh milestone, heard a man moaning, and several groans. On the tenth the body of the murdered man was found in a ditch some little distance off the road, towards the barracks. The back part of the skull was beaten in, and there was a strap round the neck. A bludgeon lay near the body, and a pair of shoes, and an old soldier's hat, with worsted binding. No clue was obtained to the crime until the end of 1806, when a deserter named Hatfield, just sentenced to the hulks for theft, confessed it. Holloway and Haggarty, labourers, had arranged the murder while they were drinking together at a public-house in Dyot-street. Haggarty, then a marine in the Shannon frigate, was apprehended at Deal. When asked where he had been, that time four years, he turned pale and almost fainted. Hatfield proved that Holloway killed Mr. Steele because he struggled much, just as a coach was ap-

proaching. Holloway carried off Mr. Steele's hat and wore it about London, till, at the instigation of Hatfield, he one day filled it with stones and threw it over Westminster Bridge. The booty was only twenty-seven shillings.

The two wretches were hung at Newgate on February 23, 1807. Holloway kept swearing he was innocent, and shouting, "No verdict, no verdict, gentlemen. Innocent, innocent." The long delay in the arrest of the men, and some lingering belief in their innocence, had attracted forty thousand people to the narrow street of the Old Bailey. When the malefactors appeared on the scaffold, the mob seethed like a black and angry sea. A struggle for life began, and several women and boys were instantly crushed to death. A savage fight for life ensued. At the end of Green Arbour-court, nearly opposite the debtors' door, a pie-man unfortunately dropped his basket, and many persons falling over this, were instantly trampled to death. A cart overloaded with spectators breaking down just then added to the horror and despair of the scene. The episodes were agonising. A father saw his son, a fine boy of twelve, trodden to death, but escaped himself with some cruel bruises. A woman with a child at the breast, in dying threw her child to a bystander, who tossed it to another who threw it to another, until it reached some people in a cart, who saved it. Upwards of a cart-load of shoes, hats, and petticoats were picked up. Twenty-seven bodies were taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital alone.

Two more legends of the heath must not be forgotten. In James the First's time (December 5, 1606), two young hot-blooded lawyers fought a duel alone in a wild part of the heath. They were found, side by side, each having spitted the other with his rapier. In this extremity they had become reconciled, though too weak from loss of blood to help each other. Three years before this, Sir John Townsend (who had been knighted at the siege of Cadiz by the chivalrous Earl of Essex) fought a duel here on horseback with Sir Matthew Brown, Baron of Beechworth, with sword and pistol. Both combatants were dangerously wounded in this desperate and fierce rencontre, Sir Matthew dying on the spot, and Sir John Townsend soon after. So the crow flies, and so the world went once.

FATAL ZERO.

A DIARY KEPT AT HOMBURG: A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER III.

THE Briton—I know him by his talking loud about my "breakfast." How often do I hear the florid, white-whiskered Briton, suffering from the heat acutely, tell his friend and tell me—for he does not care who hears him, and prefers an audience—that "he'd speak to Grungl, at the Hesse, about giving some more of that wild deer," or "that he was going to get

his cutlets, and very odd the Times was so late;" or else what seems the standard grumble, about "kreutzers and their infernal money. Look, I say, what can you make of such things as these?" And he does seem to think that wherever the Englishman goes, his money, meats, steaks, joints, beds, clubs, Times, &c., should go with him, and be the money, meat, steaks of the country. (My dearest Dora, will you know me after this, or do you suppose it is your poor invalid that is writing? Such a change in me already—to be affecting to be funny!) But I go on. Then I see the great doctor of the place, Seidler, whose book, Homburg and its Springs, is in every bookseller's. He is walking about here, talking to the English, who hang on his words, and his carriage and horses wait at the end of the walk—a good advertisement, for every stranger asks whose it is. The Briton with the white whiskers, I remark, is great on Seidler. At dinner he tells every one what "Seidler said to me this morning. Seidler made me cut off a tumbler of the kayserbrowning, and told me if I had taken it another day he would not have answered for it. Egad! I was working away, and if he hadn't stopped me," &c. Seidler, I can see, is looked on as a magician who can do as he likes with the springs, and mysteriously check their whole efficiency if you offend him. Any one who takes them without consulting *him* goes to destruction at once; or else they do the patient no good at all. We might as well be quaffing common spring water. A third of a tumbler, he will say, every half-hour in the morning, or a tumbler at seven, and half a tumbler at a quarter to ten. The idea seems to be, that, delayed till *ten*, the prescription would have no efficacy; and I see the fresh white-whiskered man, watch in hand, counting the moments. I go myself to Seidler, and believe him to be clever; and he certainly hit off my case at once. But these little tricks the English themselves force on him, as their maladies are so tricky and fanciful. He says, three weeks of the water, and, of course, of Seidler—three tumblers of the former, and one interview with the latter per diem—"will make a new man of me." And I believe him. My dear, shall I confess it, I can bear this separation, and am *not* craving to be back. It will be better in the end I should be here. But after ten days I know I shall get restless and eager to see your pretty face. Now, dear, I stop this log, for I

have to go to the baths. To-morrow I go into Frankfort on the business, having heard from the merchant, who has fixed an hour to see me. He talks of some difficulty, but I shall work hard, and do everything to show our gratitude to our dear benefactor. And if I can conclude the matter on more favourable terms, and save him some money, I shall lessen my obligation a little. I find a gentleman whom I met in the walks, and who seems to have a sort of interest in me, is going back to London to-night. I shall send him what I have written so far, and he will post it in London to Dora.

Saturday.—The first portion of the log has gone off. She will have it by Monday, and I know it will amuse them. She will read it out.

At twelve to-day, I pass by the grand red granite building, of a rich handsome stone, and which is Homburg. It is in the centre of the town in the street, but has a garden in front; with a row of orange trees, considered the noblest in the world. There is really something grand in the air of these magnificent strangers, each in his vast green box, and standing, I suppose, thirty feet high. The greatest and most tender care is taken of them: men are watering, washing, cleaning, coiffing these aristocrats, morning, noon, and night. They are allowed to appear abroad during the hot months only, and when the cooler period sets in, they are tenderly moved to a vast palace far off in the woods, built expressly for them, where they live together all the winter, with fires, and blanketing, and matting, and everything luxurious. The story runs that they were lost, one by one, by a certain landgrave, or elector, or grand duke, who staked them against a hundred pounds a piece; and now that brings me to what I have been indirectly fencing off, and which fills me with a certain dread, as I think of it. I never felt such a sensation, as when, after passing through the noble passage floored with marble, three or four hundred feet long, where a whole town might promenade, I found myself in a vast cool shaded hall that seemed like the banquetting-room of a palace. It was of noble proportions, a carved ceiling, and literally one mass of gorgeous fresco painting and gold. Noble chandeliers of the most elegant design hang down the middle, the arches in the ceiling are animated with figures of nymphs and cupids, with gardens and terraces, and the portico furnishing is rich and solid, and in the most exquisite taste. From these open other rooms, seen through

arches and beyond the folds of lace curtains, and each decorated in a different taste—one, snowy white and gold, another, pale pink and gold. The floors are parquet in the prettiest patterns. Servants in rich green and gold liveries glide about, and the most luxurious soft couches in crimson velvets line the walls. What art has done is indeed perfect and most innocent; but where nature and humanity gathers round, standing in two long groups down the room, it almost appals. For I hear the music, the faint, prolonged "a-a-a-rr." Then the clatter and sudden rattle and chinking of silver on silver, of gold on gold, and the low short sentences of those who preside over the rite, and—silence again. As I join the group and look over shoulders, then I see that strange human amphitheatre, that oval of eager and yet impassive faces, all looking down on the bright green field—the cloth of gold, indeed. What a sight! the four magicians, with their sceptres raised. The piles of gold, the rouleaux, the rich coils of dollars like glittering silver snakes, and more dangerous than a snake—the fluttering notes nestling in little velvet-lined recesses, and peeping out through the gilt bars of their little cages. There is something awful in this spectacle, and yet there is a silent fascination—something, I suppose, that must be akin to the spectacle at an execution.

The preparation, the prompt covering of the green ground in those fatal divisions, the notes here, the little glittering pile of yellow pieces, the solid handsome dollars, whose clinking seems music, the lighter florins, the double Fredericks, and the fat sausage-like rouleaux, which these wonderful and dexterous rakes adjust so delicately! Now the cards are being dealt slowly, while the most perfect stillness reigns, and every eye is bent on those hands. I hear him at the end of the first row give a sort of grunt, "ung!" then begin his second, and end with a judgment or verdict. There is a general rustle and turning away of faces, stooping forward, a marking of paper, and the four fatal rakes begin sweeping in greedily gold and notes and silver—all in confusion, a perfect rabble—while, this fatal work over, two skilful hands begin to spout money, as it were, to the ends of the earth. On the fortunate heaps left undisturbed come pouring down whole Danae showers of silver and gold; and to the rouleaux come rolling over softly companion rouleaux. Now do eager fingers stretch out and clutch their prize.

Other faces, yellow and contorted, their fingers to their lips, look on dismally. Then it begins again; figures are stooping forward to lay on; and so the wretched formula goes on, repeated—for I made the calculation—some seven hundred times that day. But it never seems to flag, and every time has the air of fresh, and fresher, novelty. It begins to sicken me, and that air of stern concentrated attention, of sacrifice even, depresses me; and when I think that if a return could be got of the agitation, palpitations, hopes, fears, despair, exultation, going on during these seven hundred operations, it would represent a total of human agony inconceivable. Then I see how it can be again multiplied through the twelve months of this wicked year. Then I think of the prospective miseries to others at a distance, to wives and to children—lives wretched, lives unsettled—miserable deaths. I say, I think of all this, and ask, is it too much to call these men special ministers of Mephistopheles—a band under the decent respectable name of a Bank, organised to destroy souls by a machinery, the like of which for completeness exists not on this earth? I say, there is nothing on earth approaching this company, whose men and emissaries ought to wear cock's feathers and red and black dresses, for their complete and successful exertions for destruction and corruption. They distil their poison over that green board, and it is carried away to all countries—to England, France, America, Belgium, Germany, whence the victims return again and again, bringing fresh ones, like true decoys. They hang men; they punish and imprison for far less crimes; but on the heads of these wretches is the ruin of thousands of bodies and souls, the spiritual death, and the actual *corporeal death* of thousands more, who have hung themselves to the fair trees planted in sweet bowers by the "administration," or stifled themselves with charcoal in front of this fatal palace, and who have actually dabbled with their brains over the vile green table on which they have lost all. A banking company! all fair, give and take, and such phrases! Satan says the same in *his* dealings.

And here is this functionary in the trim suit—a pink-faced, hard, cat-eyed sinner, who steals about, and watches everybody, and his own agents also more than any one else. A capital officer they tell me, skilful and wary at the accounts. To him the shareholders will one day present a piece

of plate, or hard cash, which he would prefer, in acknowledgment of his exertions in their interest. Oh, that some fitting punishment could be devised for those who thus fatten on the blood of the innocent! I should not come here. I should not breathe this tainted air—look on this painted vice, and their wretched shabby baits, to win the approbation of the decent and the moral, like myself. Here are your English newspapers of every kind and degree. Pray read all day long in these charming rooms, and sit on those soft couches, or out here in these charming gardens while our music plays for you. Do understand, nothing is expected from you in return. You, charming English ladies, so fair and pretty, you can work with those innocent fingers; and your nice high-spirited brothers, they would like to get up cricket, would they? Here is a nice field; we shall have it mowed and got ready, and to-morrow shall come from Frankfort the finest bats, stumps, balls—everything complete. Do you give the order; get them from London, if you like. We shall pay. There is shooting, too—quite of the best. We shall be proud to find the guns and dogs, and even the powder. It will do us an honour. Get up a little fête; a dance in the Salons des Princes. We shall light it up for you, and find the servants. So do these tricksters try to impose on us, with their sham presents, for which our Toms and Charleses—good-natured elder brothers—must pay, and pay secretly, in many a visit to these tables. They have built us a superb theatre—one of the handsomest of its size in Europe. How kind, how considerate! yet they charge us a napoleon for a stall, if there is any one worth hearing. Presents, indeed! we know the poor relative who comes with a twopenny-halfpenny pot of jam, and expects to get a handsome testimonial in return. Everything about our "administration" is in keeping; and I almost grieve that I should have come to such a place. This resolution, at least, I can make: never to let the light of an honest man's face beam on their evil doings.

I feel I am rather warm on this matter, but it does seem to me that the whole has been too gently dealt with hitherto, and treated too indulgently. Even these conquerors, who, we are told, have given them notice that they are to be *chassés*, have shown too much respect. They talk of equities—a lease. Do we hold to leases with pirates? Do we make treaties with

Bill Sykes? Had I been the king, I would have marched two regiments into their glittering halls, seized their infamous tools, broken the rakes across the soldiers' knees, torn up their cards, smashed into firewood the roulette board and its numbers, impounded their gold and silver and sent it to the hospitals, and, locking the doors and leaving sentries, have marched off M. A. and M. B., the admirable men of business, in a file of soldiers. I should have these fellows tried, and put to hard labour for the rest of their lives. As it is, a culpable weakness has given them three or four years more to pursue their vile work, and gather, say, twenty thousand precious souls into Satan's own bag net.

CHAPTER IV.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT.—I cannot endure this terrible spectacle any more, and shall not go to that place again. What I have seen to-night is almost awful. I went in to those rooms, now lit up, rich in colours, and glittering like a king's palace. Such a crowd, and such a contrast! First, I had gone on the terrace, and looked down on the charming gardens, where the innocents were at the little tables, each surrounded with its group, sipping coffee; the music playing in the pavilion. Then I turn round and look at the blazing windows, at the great door behind me, which yawns like a cavern. I hear the faint "click-click" and "rattle-rattle," and that vast and quiet group, crowded together. They are serious and earnest; but there are delighted and festive groups, wandering about—happy families, charming young girls, good-natured papas and mammas looking on with delight; and now one of the young girls comes tripping back with "Charles," in *such* delight, showing something shining in her hand. The great soft couches round are lined with festive-looking people. Every one is "circulating," and there is an air of animation and motion over all. Some curiosity makes me linger, and share it also—a wish to describe to my little darling at home such a strange and singular phase of manners and character. I draw near to that other table—the one I had not seen in the morning, and which is consecrated to roulette. It glitters all over with pieces, sown thickly, sown broadcast, dotted here, there, and everywhere, in perfect spasms of distribution. They contend with each other, this yellow, fiery-eyed, and dirty man, and the keen but pretty girl with the powder an inch thick on her face, and her pink silk

gathered up about her. They grudge each other room, do these combatants; they glare savagely underneath; the old lady in black silk guides, with a trembling hand, her single piece to some number dimly seen, but whose place she guesses at. As the ball flies round in its tiny circus, every arm, with long stretched wrists, lunges out, eager to be on; piece jostles piece. "Give us standing room," they say, no matter whether they be lost or won. Then comes the sudden leap and metallic click as the ball stumbles into its bed; then the waterfall comes spouting down from the centre—the heavy streams of coin, directed and lighting with pleasant jingling on its fellows. No one seems daunted by defeat. I see one man who has been frantically piling his gold here, there, and everywhere, and, by some strange and *devilish* perversity, is not allowed to win—no, not once—while little, mean, cautious fiddlers, with their shillings and francs, fare admirably. I see him biting his lips as his nervous fingers turn over the half-dozen little gold pieces, in that agonising uncertainty which I note so often, whether to play the bold game now, risk all, or save this little wreck for another season. And all to be decided within a second. When it is gone, a pause, and then that rueful *walking away* off the stage, while others rush into his place. Or another. His all seems gone; when, after an undecided council, his hand seeks his breast-pocket—a note to be *changed*—something that he has no right to meddle with! Then the girls, young, pretty, and not innocent of fear; then the ladies—good sensible wives at home, but transformed by coming to these places—gradually come in, greedy harpies, and ready, if they lose, to turn cat-like on their husbands. All this wreck, this shocking wreck, caused by this factory of wickedness! I have had enough for one day and for one night. I wish I had not seen it, for it makes me wretched; and yet it is worth seeing as a spectacle of infamy. What I have written, too, will interest my pet at home; and, as I know she hoards up every scrap of my writing, perhaps one day others will find it, and read it, and it may act as a warning. There! I am going to bed infinitely better. God be praised for his mercy! and for my pet's sake I will say over her little prayer, which she will be saying about the same time:

"O Lord! Thou who dost guide the ship over the waters, and bring safe to its journey's end the fiery train, look on me in this

distant land. Save me from harm of soul and body; give me back health and strength, that I may serve Thee more faithfully, and be able to bring others dependent on me to serve Thee also, and add to Thy glories! Amen."

Sunday.—How sweet and delicious are the mornings here; what soft airs blow gently from these luxuriant trees and mountains! One really grows fonder of the place every moment. The mornings are the most charming; ever so pastoral, and yet it will seem but the pastoral of the theatre or the opera—sham trees and shepherdesses; and I feel all the time that the corrupting Upas garden spreads its fatal vanities over all. These pretty wells, enchanting walks, innocent flowers, music, lights, trees, ferns, what not—they could hardly be, without *this* support. The odious and plundering vice keeps up and pays for all, even for the innocent blessings of nature; and I doubt whether one is not accessory before the act to those results in accepting *any* benefit from so contaminated a source, and lending *one's* countenance in return to their doings. But this is too much refining, and my pet at home will smile at such scruples. I must not set up to be a saint, and I shall do more practical work if, by word or example, I can save some light and careless soul from the temptation. Some way I seem to myself to be grown a little too virtuous since I came here; but in presence of this awful destroyer it is hard not to be serious.

Another of the baits to purchase the good-will of the decent is the reading room, flooded literally with journals of all climes. Squire John Bull is paid special attention to, by half a dozen of his favourite Times, Pall-Mall, Morning Herald even—though what put that journal in the heads of the administration it would be hard to tell—and the veteran Galignani. But a glass door between the Times and squire, who is stingy at heart, and resents postage, and at the same time having to subscribe to his club at home, where he can have all these papers for nothing—British flesh and blood could not stand *that*; so he and his wife—I knew him at once by his gold glass and complacent air as he reads—come every morning at eleven o'clock, and sit and devour their cheap news till one or two. The greediness and selfishness displayed as to getting papers by these people is inconceivable. I do say there is more of the little mean vices engendered in that room than one could possibly conceive in so small a space. The

moment he enters there is the questing eye looking round with suspicion and eagerness until he sees the mainsail of his Times fluttering in another Briton's hand, an old enemy—i.e. one who is a slow reader, and who reads every word. He himself is a slow reader, and reads every word; but *that* is nothing to the point. A look of dislike and anger spreads over his face; but there is the other copy, also "in hand"—in the hand of a dowager, with glasses also—"that *beast* of a woman," he tells his wife. The person in whose hands he likes to see his Times is a young "thing," a "chit of a girl," who just skims over a column or two, reads the Court Circular portion, and the account of the latest opera. Indeed, he thinks that she has no business to be reading at all. He prowls about, looking at the owners of other papers, as who should say, "Ugh, you!" Now some one lays down a paper, and he rushes at it, anticipating another cormorant by a second: it is only the *old* journal, not yesterday's. Then, with eyes of discontent, he goes up to the reader in possession of the Times, and says, bitterly, "I'll trouble you when you have done with that;" to which the answer is a grunt. And then he draws a chair close opposite to him, and if glaring can hurry, or restless moving of the chair, or impatient ejaculation, he could not fail. When he *does* secure it, what a read he has, and how he does take it out of the others! If he could he would have three or four—one to sit on, one lying near him. And yet he is not a bad man, I am sure, at home; but the very atmosphere of this place, perverts everything. Yet the French and Germans in this room take the thing tranquilly. They read their little newspaper quietly and swiftly, with a little faint eagerness to get possession of the Figaro, or some diverting paper; but no one glares at his neighbour. My Dora at home will send me out a paper, so I shall be independent of these rascals and their pitiful bribes.

Two o'clock.—The dogs in the street drawing the little milk carts, harnessed so prettily, and drawing so "willingly." Honest Tray, with his broad jaws well open, and he himself panting from the heat, looks up every now and again to the neat German girl who walks by him. When she wants him to go on, she leads him gently by his great yellow ear, as if it was a bridle. When there are two together they trot on merrily; but the work is too much for the poor paws of a single one. When

they are waiting, I notice she draws them into the shade, and they lie down there, in their harness.

I must tell you, dearest, about the people here, for this is a great place in which to study human nature and character. All the tribes of the earth seem to come here and take a new sort of shape as they stay. It is a paradise for women, and for pretty women, and therefore if my pet were here, —but I must not turn that pretty head. Neither should I like her to be exposed to the bold, free-and-easy study of some of the gentry who walk about here, and survey beauty leisurely. In England, did any venture to "stare," as we would call it, in such a fashion, we should be tempted to fetch him a good stroke across his insolent face. But here, in this scattering of all the licentious free laws of Europe, it is tolerated and invited even. Yes, women are actually proud of this questionable sort of attention, and they give a look in return, though only a second's length, as if to challenge fresh attention. And yet it must be owned our own decent, decorous dames and girls, they look a poor race here; they seem to want style, which is with beauty, colour, everything save expression. There is, indeed, a charming-looking girl, who walks about here with a sister, and has an air of enjoyment and delight truly refreshing in the fade indifference which prevails. She has the most mysterious likeness to my Dora at home: I am glad she is here, as she will be a little photograph of one who is so dear to me. The same expression, the same aristocratic look that *she* has. Petite, with an exquisitely-shaped head, the richest and glossiest dark hair, the most refined outline of face; I am struck with her more and more. What contrasts to her the Americans, dressed to extravagance in theatrical "costumes," as they call laces and flounces, and the shortest of dresses, and the highest of heels, some certainly two or three inches high! Their faces are surprisingly round and full and brilliant, their figures good and handsome, which is a surprise; but when they open their full lips out streams the twang, nasal and horny. I shall see more of them, however, at a ball to be given presently. I know some little details of dress, &c., will amuse. What will my pet say to a rich black silk Watteau

dress, all looped and curtained up, all over embroidery, with a crimson Spanish petticoat seen below, and the black all lit up here and there with the most delicate little lines and edging of crimson? It is as delicate as a Cardinal's undress. What will I say? I hear my pet answer. It would cost half a year's salary. Then what will she say to a faint amber-coloured summer dress, all looped and hanging in festoons, with a pale blue and white petticoat? This is, indeed, dressing in water colour, and both are American. There is another, a sort of pale sprite of a fairy, so white and delicate are her cheeks, so lustrous her eyes, so artificial the effect. She is all eternal smiles and giggling, and writhing and twistings of the neck, a favourite part of American pantomime. Her dress is becomingly short, and the oft-quoted Sir John Suckling's line is abolished, and ladies feet do not, like little mice, "run in and out;" but rather arrogantly display themselves peacock-like, as ostentatiously as they can. We might find patterns here for the plumage of all the birds of the air, from the flamingo downward; with a good deal of damaged ware, which I would not for the world my pet saw, but this is only more of the work of the Mephistopheles company yonder. To think, again I say, that these pure blessings, these life-giving springs, sent to give strength and innocence, all to be turned into fresh agents for attracting villany and vice. Was there ever such diabolical perversity!

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